

Ballard Civic Center Park Community Meeting #2 Summary 1/13/04

Meeting purpose: To review three conceptual design alternatives and hear community ideas for the future Civic Center Park development and programs.

For more information: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/proparks/projects/BallardMunicipalCenterPark.htm>

About 150 community members participated in the second planning meeting for the Ballard Civic Center park. A show of hands at the beginning of the meeting indicated the group was primarily comprised of Ballard residents (about 80% of the names on the sign-in sheets were 98107 or 98117 zip codes, another 14% were Seattle north end residents). Many people at the meeting lived within walking distance of the park, many had participated in creating the Ballard Crown Hill Neighborhood Plan or the Ballard Civic Center Master Plan, and many helped to build the skateboard park or were skateboarders.

Parks summary of the project background, schedule, and budget

The 2000 Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.47 million for project planning, design and construction of this new 1.38-acre urban park. The park will be constructed in 2005. The basis of the park design comes from the Ballard Civic Center Master Plan. Copies of the Master Plan were available at the meeting for community review and are available at the Ballard Neighborhood Service Center and at: http://www.seattle.gov/realestate/bmc/bmc_master_plan.htm

Northwest Community Police Officer Larry Jackson reviewed Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards. Police and Parks staff have and will continue to work together to make sure issues of lighting, seating, comfort stations (bathrooms), and graffiti are discussed and that CPTED guidelines considered for a safer new park.

Parks Northwest Maintenance and Operations Manager Kathie Huus spoke about the need to build a park that will be safe and clean, and a park that can be maintained at a high level with existing City resources. She also reviewed Parks' Skateboard Park policy. **Park Planner Cathy Tuttle** spoke about the Park Naming Policy. The Park Naming Committee will recommend a name for a park based on community input; the Superintendent will make the final naming decision. A copy of the Park Naming Policy is at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Publications/namingPolicy.htm>

Parks Public Information Officer Mareatha Counts summarized the findings of the 10/28/03 kick-off community meeting. Sign-in sheets show 120 community members attending, of whom 92% (109) were local or north Seattle residents. We transcribed more than 700 community comments from the first meeting; these comments are available on the park web page. The vision of the park is imaginative, inclusive, safe, lively and sustainable. The community thought the park should face outward and be linked to the neighborhood. Programs for the park might include places for large and small community gatherings, a skateboard park, lawn, trees, a comfort station, a water feature, and bicycle area. The October meeting was marked by participants' sincere and open-minded listening to each others' opinions and ideas. Even when people disagreed, they were respectful and willing to hear other viewpoints.

Barbara Swift and Lisa Corry of Swift & Company Landscape Architects presented three concept plans to the community that incorporated many of the community ideas from the first public meeting. The concepts are on the park web page and posted on the park sign.

The community was asked to provide answers to four questions that would help Parks and the landscape architects move forward to a single new design. The questions are:

1. How will you and your family use this park?
2. What activities and events do you envision happening in the park?
3. How can the park be a good neighbor in Ballard?
4. Which alternatives do you like best and why?

Thirty-two community members also answered these questions via a mail-in survey. The following summarizes all of these community responses.

How will you and your family use this park?

When people use the park individually or with their families, they look forward to walking, people watching, skateboarding, and play. The community asked for an active park with pockets for peaceful contemplation. People want a place to walk their dogs and throw a Frisbee, and yet still find a corner to sit quietly with a book and a cup of coffee. They want a bathroom, a picnic area and the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of skaters and non-skaters. Some individual comments:

- There should be a restroom available. How many kids at play can really wait to use their restroom at home?
- I will likely sit in the park after church, chat with friends, watch skateboarders and climbers. I will bring grandchildren to try out the climbing wall (assuming there are spots easy enough for 6-12 years old) I would meet friends there to go bicycling on the Burke Gilman. St. Luke's is my church-I am there at least 2xweekly-and I anticipate the enhanced beauty of the area... Sunday and holiday afternoon mini concerts like those at Ballard Locks not amplified) Maybe small wedding or birthday celebration. Lots of people reading, taking lunch breaks, watching, talking with friends maybe some seniors playing badminton or croquet. (Maybe a "built in checkerboard) ... Full accessibility for wheelchairs and strollers. Frequent trash pick up. Lighting sensitive to/not keeping awake apartment dwellers all night. Bike racks, skate boarders must have direct street access to bowl for safety of seniors and small kids using the park on foot. Secured benches and features to prevent disruption.
- Put as much greenery as possible and as little hardscaping as possible. I'd like to watch skateboarders, eat food that we purchase somewhere else. No commercialism, no vendors, no advertising.
- Our child usually comes to the park daily to skate. If the bowl remains we will be able to join him and relax on the grass and observe him.
- Provide an outdoor place to read and a place to have a casual coffee etc. The park provides an alternative place to go besides the Locks and Golden Gardens.
- A skateboard park is much more versatile than the usual children's playground.

How can the park be a good neighbor to Ballard?

The community desires a park that is clean, safe, and attractive throughout the day, year round. The community wants a park with room for festivals and community gatherings, a restroom, a water feature, and a connection to the new Ballard Library. People had mixed feelings about skateboarders. On the one hand, a skateboard park element could provide a dynamic activity, making the park more active and secure. On the other hand, skateboarders could have a negative impact in terms of noise and parking.

- Skate facility – not a good neighbor. Promised temporary facility – not intended to remain
- Provide a place for all types of people to come together. Different users at different times/seasons provide more "eyes on park."
- We're 50 years old, homeowners, and we live two blocks from the site. We enjoy watching and conversing with the skaters. We want a park that is clean and green, not a haven for alcoholics, open, casual feel with formal elements, a place to stroll and linger. A place for festivals, small groups, skaters, small events.
- It should be a relaxing place to meet and greet one's neighbors-which means no skateboarders.
- Be pedestrian friendly: provide access from library. Have volunteer maintenance crews. Develop adopt-a- park for new park.

What activities and events do you envision happening?

The community sees great opportunities for art and cultural events in this park – movies, theater, music, jazz festivals, historic reenactments, kids doing art, reading. The park could be a picnic place, host farmer's markets, and support activities like a play area, climbing wall, or skateboard park.

- Keep the bowl – it means so much to so many people.
- Make gathering places for activity, non-passive, and socializing. A place of relaxation and community. Alternatives with the existing "Seattle Bowl" are the most inclusive and accommodating. Kids need places for their activities without being made into criminals. Keep the skating please!
- I see a May Pole for Spring, A sooner fest, and a huge organic farmers market in honor of Fall and the Harvest. Also a Skate boarding contest! And maybe races!!
- Tie the parade through here somehow.

Which alternatives do you like best and why?

The community liked more curvilinear paths with large gathering areas. There was some discussion about whether there should be more lawn or more paved plaza area. In general the community supported active zones, restrooms, skateboarding, and large open spaces. The community agreed the active and quiet areas should be separated. Community comments include:

- Likes and active park – helps people interact – get along – communicate. Activity makes it safer
- Don't want a water wasting fountain
- Don't need large lawns. The Locks have large lawns, which the GEESE love. Amphitheater yes. Sidewalk seating zone yes. How about some family-size hammocks? A solar panel demo?
- Skatepark sounds like a great idea, I'm not a skater. Please don't screen the entire skate area, I'd like a view.
- Organize the spaces for elderly, young children, teens, families, young adults – create edges that maximize activities. Skating should be a small piece of this park. No amphitheater (wasted space).

Community questions

Here are community questions from the Jan. 13 meeting, along with answers from staff and consultants:

1. **There isn't one plan that we like – can we take ideas from each of them in the schematic?** Yes, absolutely. The single alternative will incorporate community and staff comments and use elements from all three of the alternatives.
2. **How many people can fit in each of these options?** A basic requirement of the Ballard Civic Center Master Plan is for a park that can accommodate Ballard's frequent community festivals and events. Seating for 175-300 in an amphitheater-like setting, and capacity within the park for festivals with vendors and 600-900 people is possible in all alternatives.
3. **Where are the shadows after the surrounding buildings are built? The QFC can be 74'?** That is correct. Our neighbor to the west can build up to 74 feet. We are working with the developers to maximize sunlight in this central park as well as design active areas where there is less shade. We will discuss some of these issues at the next community meeting.
4. **Can Parks work with the proposed QFC/Security Properties redevelopment project on the park's western border?** Parks has and will continue to work closely with our nearest neighbor to creatively provide the best public spaces possible along our shared boundary. We are also working with our other nearby neighbors to make sure the park fits well into Ballard.

Next steps

- **Community meeting #3** Tuesday, March 9 from 7 to 9 p.m. at 5701 22nd Ave NW (the old Safeway on the future park site). Parks will present a single alternative for community review.
- **The Board of Park Commissioners** will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation on the approved schematic design later this spring.
- **Please contact Cathy Tuttle with questions or comments at** (206) 684-7033 cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov Seattle Parks and Recreation, 800 Maynard Avenue South #300, Seattle 98134.

